

A
S E R M O N,
Preach'd before the
S O C I E T I E S
F O R
Reformation of Manners,
I N
D U B L I N:

October the 4th, 1698.

By *Tho. Emlyn.*

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THE M O N

OF THE

FOR

DUBLIN:

By J. B. Smith.

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I. Sam. 2. v. xxx.

*Them that honour me, I will honour;
and they that despise me, shall be
lightly esteemed.*

AS 'tis easy to apprehend the important Consequences of that Excellent Work, for the furtherance of which, we are here met, *viz.* The endeavouring an effectual restraint upon the Open Indecencies of a Lewd Age: So I doubt not, but the Trial which some of you have made herein, hath convinc'd you more than ever, that not a few Discouragements are like to attend the promotion of so Pious a Design: That the strong Man Arm'd, after so long and quiet a Possession, is not to be turned out but with conflict and violence; That those Sons of *Belial*, who if let alone, will surely prove as Thorns in your sides, by provoking the Anger of Heaven against us, are, when you thrust them away, as Thorns in your hands; so, that as *David* speaks, *He that touches them, had need be fenced with Iron and the staff of a Spear,* 2 Sam. 23. 6, 7.

Since therefore 'tis now my part to strengthen your hands, that they may never hang down in the pursuit of so sacred an Attempt, I have judg'd it requisite to lay before you some *Motives*, that may be proportionable, both to the greatness of your Task, and the *Variety* of your Discouragements.

And I think there is enough contained in the Text to answer my end; for it intimates your Work to be honourable in God's account, and that it shall redound to your own immortal honour in the issue.

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Humane Nature never acts with more violence and force, than when it feels the power of Aspiring Ambition after great Renown, and tho. my Brethren, I hope the fading honour of this World is contemptible in your Eye, as Sounding Brass, or a Tinkling Cymbal; yet honour from God is a great thing, all Ambition is just, but none too great, nor any contention too warm, where this is the Prize.

How suitable an Application to the present Occasion, my Text will admit of, may better be seen after a little enquiry into the Context. 'Tis part of a sad Message from God, and for the greater solemnity, sent by a Man of God to *Eli*, who was over the Tribes of *Israel* a Judge; and over the House of God, the High-Priest: How he came by the latter Dignity, is not evident; both from Scripture and *Josephus* it appears, that he was not of the Elder Line of *Aaron's* Family by *Eleazer*, but of the Younger, from *Ithamar*, and consequently not the legal Heir to that Honour; but sometime, during the Rule of the Judges over *Israel*, the High-Priesthood was translated to the younger Line; for what

cause is not known; A very Learned Author *Dr. Ligh. 2d.* in the Jewish History, supposes it might be, *Vol. p. 1218.* because of the Miscarriage of the High-Priest,

in permitting *Jephthah* to Sacrifice his Daughter, when he should have counselled him better, out of the Law of God; and this supposition of his, may find some Countenance from that Relation of some of the Jewish Doctors which I meet with elsewhere; they

D. Tayl. Diss. say, That *Jephthah* disdained to go to the High-Priest for a Commutation, or release

from his Vow; and he wou'd not go to *Jephthah*, because he did not ask his help; therefore say they, *Jephthah* was smitten with the Palsie, and the High-Priest was deprived of the Spirit of God: And if so much be true, the other is no unlikely supposition. By this, it seems *Eli*, in his possession of that Office, carried a memorial of God's displeasure against the Neglecters of his Honour, and yet himself incurs it the same way: Not by any positive presumptuous Crime of his own, but by remissness of checking the Prophaneness of others.

The Iniquity of his Sons was come to an unsufferable and daring height, they prostituted their sacred Function to their Sensuality and Lust, as it is set down from Verse 12, to

Verse

Verse 18. such was their contempt of God, that tho the Tabernacle was his House, and they were only his Guard and Attendance, and the Sacrifices his Provisions, yet they would be served first, and would carve for their own Bellies, before it went to God's Table, I mean, before the Fat was burn'd on his Altar. And being thus highly fed, like Horses, they Neighed after their Neighbour's Wife. *Jer.* 5. 8. They lay with the Women at the door of the Tabernacle, *ver.* 22. as if they would affront God to his Face, putting their filth under his very Nose; thus his House was now made a Den of Harlots and Adulterers, that afterwards was so of Thieves and Robbers; insomuch that Men abhorred the Offering of the Lord, *v.* 17. It cannot but grieve Conscientious Worshippers, to see the Sacred Solemnities of Religion pass through Unhallowed hands, that reap indeed the benefit of others Reverence for God, while themselves shew none.

But, what is this to *Eli*? that he must suffer for other Men's sins; It was because he restrained them not, *Chap.* 3. *v.* 13. He did indeed reprove them, *Chap.* 2. *v.* 24. He dealt gently with the Young-men; but impudent Sinners require sharper Corrections than friendly Rebukes; like the unruly *Leviathan*, they laugh at the shaking of that Spear, and those Arrows will not make them flee, *Job* 41. 28, 29. So that when better Remedies are in our power, a bare Reproof of bold Sinners, is no sufficient discharge of our Duty; God counts this for nothing in *Eli*; He, as a Magistrate, should have made 'em Publick Examples for a warning to others: For neglecting this, God sends him a severe Message, *upbraiding* him with Ingratitude for past Favours, so ill requited; *charging* him with honouring his Sons above his God; to save their Reputation, he let God's sink and fall; and then *recanting* all his former thoughts of Kindness, all his Conditional Promises, he threatens him and his Family with Utter Ruine to the Generations to come. The reason and equity of which procedure in this and like Cases, he expresses in the words of the Text, *Be it far from me, for them that honour me, I will honour.* As if he had said, after the manner of Men, I had once a great Kindness for thee and thy House, and hadst thou but concerned thy self to vindicate my Name, by suppressing and punishing the Wickedness of those vile Wretches, thou hadst lost no Honour by it, I would have advanc'd thee to

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great Dignity; but now far be it from me, to honour such a scornful despiser of his God, no; 'tis farthest from my thoughts, thy name shall Perish, thy memory Rot, thy family Sink, and thy posterity shall continue, only to be, by their Poverty and Ignominy, the Monuments of thy Sin, and my Indignation; I'll reserve my Favours for them that shall do me the Service which thou refusedst: And that you may not think this proceeding to be any singular Instance with *Eli* only, God lays it down as a General Rule, *Them that honour me, &c.*

Having led you thus, to a right view of the Words, I suppose I shall do no violence to them, by deducing from them this Proposition, *viz.*

Doct. That they who honour God, by endeavouring to suppress and punish the scandalous Crimes of prophan Sinners, shall have their Zeal repaid with eminent returns of Honour from God, while they that are unconcerned for his Glory in that matter, shall be the objects of Contempt and Disdain.

The latter Branch may serve to enforce the former, which I will prosecute under these General Heads. *First*, I will endeavour to shew, that such as are sincerely engaged in this Design, do honour God in it. *Secondly*, That God will repay their Zeal, by Honouring them. *Thirdly*, I shall apply the whole to excite, and encourage you that are, or may be engag'd in this happy Affair.

I. They who endeavour to suppress the scandalous Crimes of the Age, do greatly honour God: He who is the best Judge of his own honour, plainly owns it here, in that he charges *Eli* with failing to honour him, by neglecting this Work.

And here I must consider, first what it is to honour God, and then, how we may apply it to such Persons. As for honouring God in general, 'Tis not like his honouring us, which is by conferring some Excellency or Dignity upon us, to make us greater than we were before: 'Tis God's honour that he is not capable of such as this; he cannot be a more Glorious Exalted Being than he is. We can therefore honour God only such ways as these, *either Internally*, by high and lofty Conceptions of his Being and Perfections, by being fill'd with adoring, admiring Apprehensions of his Infinite Majesty, Wisdom, Power and Goodness,

ness; making him the Object of our Chief Esteem, and Superlative Love. Or Externally, by some sensible Manifestation of this; of which open, visible honour, I am principally to speak; and it is to be given one of these two Ways in general.

I. When we wipe off any dishonour or reproach cast upon God; preventing or removing what may tend to disparage his Perfections; to weaken his Authority with Men; to abate of his due Reverence, or to render him cheap and mean in the Eyes of any; this is to preserve his Honour.

II. When we do any thing that represents him Great and Glorious to others, when we express our own high thoughts of God, so as to give occasion to them to raise their esteem of him, whether it be by Words or Actions, and these either of Worship or other Obedience, so praise glorify God, *Pf. 50. ult.* it declares his Excellency, and raises Admiration; any thing that greatens God in the sense of Men, is honour done to him.

Now I come to apply it, by shewing that they do thus honour God, who labour to suppress open Prophaneness: And this will fully appear, if we consider,

1. That open Prophaness is a great dishonour to God, from the reproach of which, these Persons seek to rescue his Name. Tho the Eyes of God are so very pure, that the least Mote of Sin offends them as truly as the greatest Beam, yet not in the same Measure: God is dishonoured, and his Law Affronted by every indulged Sin, be it never so well covered under the Vail of Secrecy, or disguised by the Art of Hypocrisie; but then 'tis but like a private Affront, which puts not half that Disgrace upon a Man, as some open Abuse. Some reverence for God is yet preserved among Men, when the Soas of *Belial* do in outward behaviour imitate the Sons of God, when the Devil dares not appear in his own Colours, but as of old, in *Saul's* time, shrouds himself under the Prophet's Mantle. But when Men declare their Sin as *Sodom*, when their Crimes are of the first Magnitude, and in open view; when they Swear in the Market-place, Reel in the Streets, and Assemble themselves by Troops in Harlots Houses; then the honour of God receives a deep Wound, and the highest Contempt is poured on that Being of Infinite Majesty, as tho he were a Being of no Authority, whose Will they dare at any time contradict, whose Indignation they Challenge, and his Threatnings

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Threatnings they treat with Mockery and Scorn. Such things as these, sink the esteem of God in the World, and make him contemptibly spoken of, *Rom. 2. 23, 24.* Some are tempted hereby to say, That he hath *forjaken the Earth*, and minds not what is done there, *Ezek. 9. 9.* Others, That *God is like themselves*, not so much as an Enemy to their Crimes, as some pretend, *Psal. 30. 21.* And if such Men go on without Check in this manner, What will become of the Honour of God at present? How will his Authority and Worship be upheld, or his Memorial be preserved among Men?

Now from this grievous contempt, the Friends of God wou'd gladly see his Name Vindicated; which must be either by *Reclaiming* such vile Offenders, of which there is almost no hope, for can the *Ethiopian* change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? *Jer. 13. 23.* then may such long accustomed over-grown Sinners learn to do well: Or by *Punishing* them with marks of publick Disgrace, this may prove a means of *Reforming* them, who having no feeling in their seared Consciences, are in vain attacked with serious Counsel and Arguments, but it may be will Learn, when taught, as the Men of *Succoth* were by *Gideon*, with Briars and Thorns; or as *Manasseh*, by Fetters and Bonds: However, such publick Punishments will deter others from an imitation, and will be an open Testimony, that the Community disowns such Persons with Shame and Indignation, and cannot with Patience bear their insolent Affronts of the great God: These methods will very much prevent the common contempt of God, they teach the People to look upon such Sins with horror, as base and Criminal Acts; and thus, in a good measure, the Honour of God is maintained and salved, by suppressing open Immorality in the general.

And among all the Works of Darknes that are common, I think there are none, against which the wounded Honour of God more requires your zealous help, than against these Enormities, which you of these Societies have taken special cognizance of, *viz.* Prophane Swearing and Cursing, breaking the Sabbath, and abominable Uncleanness; Crimes so hainous, that one can hardly say, as God to the Prophet, Son of Man, I will shew thee yet greater Abominations than these. As for prophane Oaths and Curses, the monstrous Sins of our Age, in which for a long time, Oaths have vied

with

with words for number, and the studied Eloquence of the Times, hath been how to Swear, in the most thundring and terrifying Dialect: Can any thing express more scorn of the Sacred and Tremendous Name of God, than to make it the wanton by-word of our common Talk, and the mention of it, the usual fruit of our *Madness and Fury*? That Men, when angry at their Fellow-Creatures, shou'd take their revenge upon God, by tearing and rending his dreadful Name! That God and the Devil shou'd both be regarded alike by them! For either word serves the turn, that which first comes in their way, and usually where God's Name is at the beginning of a Sentence, in an horrid Oath, the Devil's is at the end of it in an hellish Curse, and they seem to have an equal respect for both.

As for the breach of the Holy Sabbath, since nothing hath a more direct aspect upon the Honour of God, than the Reverence and Solemnities of his publick Worship, in United Assemblies; and since he hath intimated his Will, that this be on one day in Seven, it must needs be a bold stroak at his Honour, in them that needlessly refuse to contribute openly to it. It was a Sacrilegious thieving from God's Altar, that was part of the heavy Charge against *Eli's* Sons, they would have God's Portion, and force him to change without his Consent, *Ch. 2. v. 15. 16.* And is not the Sacrilege as great in defrauding him of his Time, and the Homage belonging to it:

We find an unusual flame of Zeal in our *John 2. 15,* Saviours Breast, upon an irreverent Propagation of that holy Temple, where God visibly dwelt; and will not his day deserve as zealous a vindication as his House? Since they are two circumstances of one rank, can any one tell me, why *Hallowed time* shou'd not be as Sacred as an *Hallowed Place*? Oh, how dishonourable then to God is their Crime, who prostitute his sacred time to Secular Uses! One is Journying, another Physicking, and a Third, taking his Pleasure; and thus the Lord's day is made a very Dung-hill day, on which ungodly Men, throw all the refuse-business of an idle or mispent Week; and many of these are under Self-condemnation, while at other times they can stand up in the solemn Assemblies, to profess an Obligation on their Consciences, to observe the Fourth Commandment; but alas, thir Hearts are not yet inclined to keep that Law!

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As for the shameless violations of the Laws of Chastity, they have been, both by God, and many Pagan Nations, numbred among the blackest Crimes, insomuch, that God hath peculiar reserves of Vengeance, for those that commit them; *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will Judge, Heb. 13. 4.* 'Tis such an awful and terrifying word, which dropt from the Wise-man, that it may astonish us to think how any Man's Conscience can get over it, without agonies of dread; *The mouth of a strange Woman is a deep pit, he that is abhorred of the Lord, falls therein, Prov. 22. 14* And this was another of the so scandalous and punishable faults of Eli's Sons.

Now these things shew, what mighty Service you will do for the Glory of God, if you can cover his Name from these affronts of scornful Men; either by suppressing their Vices, or making them shameful and costly to such as will give them harbour. Oh, how honourable wou'd the name of God be, if we could but see the day, when none should dare to use it but with solemnity and reverence! When none shall take an Oath, but as a part of the serious awful Worship he owes to the omniscient Ruler of the World; when an universal silence on the Sabbath-day, from the noise of Secular Business, shall help to proclaim our profound veneration for God, while he is in his holy Habitation.

2. Such Persons do directly honour God, in their sincere attempts of this kind, as they plainly manifest their own great esteem of God, and reverence for his Laws: What greater representation can Men give of God, than that he is a Being whose reproach they cannot bear, one so Great, so good, so loved by his Servants, that they are content to vindicate his Honour with the most expensive Zeal? Sure 'tis to the Glory of God, when the World shall see, he hath some Friends who dare espouse his Quarrel, some who are open Advocates for his despised Authority; that in a degenerate age, there are some to protest against the Usurpation of Satan; so that if he be not honoured in the Reformation of the Publick, yet in as much as you have vigorously contended for it, I may say as the Apostle; *On your part he is Glorified, tho on theirs he is evil spoken of, 1 Pet. 4. 14.*

II. The next General Head, is to shew, how God will honour them that shew such tenderness of his Honour.

First; He will honour them by his own esteem and approbation of them, they may be the World's dross, but they shall

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be God's *Jewels*: The Men of *Sodom* scoffed at *Lot* for reproving them, but God honour'd him as a *Righteous Soul*, 2 *Per*. 2. 8. The prophane Crew may cry out upon you as they against *Paul*, *Away with such fellows, they are not fit to live*, *Acts* 22. 22. But God will say rather, *Of you the World was not worthy*, *Heb.* 11. 38. And I hope God's good word is more to you, than the applauses of all the World.

Secondly, He may probably place visible marks of Honour upon them in this Life. Our good Name is in God's keeping, who hath many ways to advance our Esteem, and when he pleases, our rankest Enemies shall contribute to it. as *Mordecai* found; all Promotion hath its rise in the Court of Heaven, so that he permits or hinders it as he pleases. *Psalms*. 75. 6. 7. He can bless your Substance unto abundance, and put you into the common road of Honour.

Or he may honour you another way, *viz.* By giving you great success in your worthy attempts; and verily that will be no small Renown, to be such Blessings in your Places; to be Conquerors over the Vices of the Age; to hide a multitude of sins and to save a Nation from Ruine, such a good Name will be a precious Ointment of Everlasting favor.

And verily Sirs. God hath in part thus honoured you; 'tis to your Glory, that not only at home, but abroad in the neighbouring Kingdom, some of us have heard the fame of your Zeal. I may say to you, as *Paul* to the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Thess.* 1. 9. (only putting your Zeal instead of their Faith) That 'tis every where spoken off. they needed not that we shou'd tell them, for themselves shew us concerning you: They can tell that *Dublin* is no safe Harbour for the Profane and Lewd to come to; That in it are Magistrates and People, that profess themselves a Terror to Evil-doers.

Thirdly, God will not fail to honour them eminently in another World, and there great things shall be done to the Man whom the King of Heaven shall delight to honour: There doubtless, they who have laboured to turn many from Unrighteousness, as well as they that have turn'd many to Righteousness shall shine, not with the common and faint glimmering of the *Firmament*, but with the more bright Lushre of the *Stars*, *Dan.* 12. 3. Yea, they shall differ from other Stars in Glory.

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The APPLICATION.

I **U** **S** **E.** Is God so highly honour'd by such Endeavours? Then let us all be concerned for his Honour, in this way: The Text suggests to you the *Weightiest* Argument in the World, *viz.* That you should do it for *God's sake*, and the most sensible Argument, do it for your own sake; 'tis the Cause of God's Honour, and the Interest of your own: But methinks nothing should more move us, than the just, but terrible Interpretation, God will put upon our neglect, to promote this Work, even, *that we despise him*; as tho he were some Contemptible Being, whose Glory we think not worthy our contending for. Dare we lye under so heavy a Charge? Certainly, my Brethren, we serve a God, whose Honour well deserves our pains to uphold it; nay, can we make him the great Object of our Solemn Adoration, and daily Homage? Can we think him meet, at whose Feet to cast our selves down in a Reverend Prostration, and yet at the same time, not judge his Honour worth maintaining? This wou'd reproach our selves with the grossest Stupidity, for Worshiping one with awful dread, whom we are content should be made contemptible with others. Ah, base Creature, that hast such a God; of such Infinite Majesty, Wisdom and Goodness, and yet refusest to plead for him! A dumb and useless Idol might serve thy turn, since thou carest not how mean and vile the Object of thy Worship is.

But I would rather hope of you that hear me now, That you are rather inquisitive, how you may contribute to God's Honour in this Affair; probably you'll say, from such a Man as *Eliz.* God might expect it, he being an Eminent Magistrate, had power to do what private Persons cannot, had we the Sword of Justice, we would surely draw it in God's Quarrel and Defence; but what can we do now?

Ans. First, 'Tis indeed most true, that Magistrates have more Eminent Advantages for Honouring God this way, which they should by no means lose. They are the Life of every Honourable Enterprize, giving credit to it by their Example, and *Security*, by the shelter of their Authority, they are the principal Wheel in all Regular Publick Motions; if they stop, or move heavily and unwillingly, the whole Affair halts; tho inferior Persons shall be never so zealous, yet
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without them, they may sit down and lament, that the Children are come to the Birth, but there is no strength to bring forth.

For this reason, it might be that *Reforming Work* was not pursued in the two late Reigns, tho the same Persons were then living, that with such Pious Resolution began it since in the *Metropolis* of the Neighbour Kingdom; they were then formed, tho more secretly, into a Religious Society; but there was so much Wickedness, at that time, in High places, that such a Design could find no Countenance: But now that Publick Authority, as a *Monument of Gratitude*, for our late Deliverance, hath declared War against those Domestick Enemies, I mean, our scandalous Impieties. Now, that our King hath *Decreed this Justice*, and our Parliaments have Voted down Profaneness, now that *Wholsom Laws* are Eanctad, (may they be as irreverfible as the *Laws* of the *Medes* and *Persians*) we see there wants not a number who are ready to run to that Banner which is display'd for the honour of God, so great is the Magistrate's Influence in this matter; yea, and that of Subordinate ones two, that the cause of God's passing Sentence upon *Jerusalem* was this; they could not find one that would *Execute Judgment*, not a Magistrate would appear to countenance what was good, so that such may be said to be entrusted with *Ten Talents*, when private Persons have but *One or Two*.

What Conscience then should they make of such a great Prize in their hands? since this is the very express end, which God, who gives them their Power, (and will shortly ask an account of the use of it) hath assigned it to, *viz.* To be a *Terror to Evil doers*, Rom. 13. 4. Were I to be their Monitor, it should be in *David's* words; *Be wise O ye Rulers, be instructed O ye Judges of the Land, serve the Lord with fear: Kiss the Son, lest he be angry*, Ps. 2. 10, 11. I would humbly ask, whose Superscription do you bear? And since the Truth, as well as a regard to your own Honour, allows you to say, *God's*; Oh, then render to him the things that are his! You would not incur the suspicion of Disloyalty to your Prince, by conniving at publick Affronts to his Name or Person; it wou'd be with you a strong Argument which they used to *Pilate*, *If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend*, Joh. 19. 12, 13. It touch'd him so to the quick, that he durst shew no more favour to our Blessed Lord: Why should it not be a stronger Argument, to tell you that you are not God's friends
if

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if you let profligate Offenders escape? In a word, Magistrates shou'd be like the Heavely Orbs, not barely to roll over the People's heads in a Lordly Dominion, but also to afford a Benign Aspect upon the Common-weal.

Secondly, Yet as every *Common Soldier*, without leaving his Rank, may do good Service in the Battel, as well as his *Commander*, so may all of you cast some Mites into this Treasury of God's Honour; in such Instances as these.—

I. You may serve his honour in this matter, by laying the Impieties of the Prophane before the Magistrate, in order to punishment. Be not ashamed to come in as a witness for the Great King of Heaven; *Eli* found many Informers against his own Sons, this aggravated his Crime, in not restraining them. If Magistrates will not execute Justice, the Guilt lies at their door, but if you do not carry it thither, I fear it will lie at your own: We oft speak of bearing a *Testimony* against *National Sins*; The best Testimony that I know of, is that before a Magistrate, in order to their being punished. I truly think, no Customary bold Sinner, that openly offends, should be spared, tho he were our Companion. Remember *Eli* suffered for sparing the Off-spring of his own Bowels; when God upon the scornful Language of a Degenerate Age, cries out, Who is on my side? Who dares but offer himself? And as all should do their part in general, so it were to be wish'd, That some who are most capable of prudent, active service, would join themselves to those Societies, which are well enough known in this City, to bear part of the Burden, in this both *Necessary* and *legal* design, as Sinners *join hand in hand* to escape punishment, so shold you joyn to prevent them: *Prov. 11. 28.* Let me tell you, in this Case more than ordinary concern should be shown, that passage of *Austin* being applicable here; *Non amat, qui non zelat.* He is hardly a Friend of God, that is not warm and earnest in this important Service.

2. Many of you may honour God in this Work with your *Substance*, *Prov. 39.* You know the Precept is general, but when you come to put it in practice, it must be in some particular instance, and I know no occasion to which I may more properly apply it, than this in hand, being an Affair that necessarily involves in it considerable Expences, of which the occasions are *Just and Honourable*; much may be said to commend such Liberality; Let it be consider'd, that it excels *ordinary Charity to the poor*, which yet Christ will take eminent notice

notice of in the day of Judgment, and to which so many remarkable Promises are made by him. The great advantage of which is, that God will allow it to have an ultimate reference to himself, *In as much as ye have done it to these, you did it to me.* Matt. 25. 40. But in this case, what we give, is more directly and immediately *done to God*, without the benefit of such a favourable construction as that.

Besides, that such occasions do not offer themselves so frequently as those for common Charity, you are always encompassed with Objects of that nature, but you have not always such noble designs on foot for the honour of God, to require your aid; so that I may very properly here, apply Christ's words on something a like occasion; *The poor you have always with you, but me ye have not always,* Matt. 26. 11. Take therefore the present opportunity.

3. You shou'd all further this blessed Work, by giving it countenance and approbation; there is no doubt, but while Immorality hath so many Patrons, *this way* will be every where spoken against, and they that attempt the restraint of lewd men, tho in the most regular way, will incur the *ill Word* and *ill Will* of such, as either feel, or fear the just punishment of their Crimes; and especially if they be necessitated to use what may seem less generous Methods, tho very lawful, for the more effectual promotion of their designed end, as well as for their own safety, or if there shou'd be the least imprudent step taken; but do you rather cover their defects than aggravate them; 'tis no wonder, if when so filthy a house is sweeping, some offensive dust shou'd fly about, which is to be born, in order to cleaning. There are enough to animadvert and censure, take not their part; let *Baal* plead for himself, let Prophaneness be its own Advocate, be not you so much the *Friends* of Publicans and Sinners.

4. Let all favour and further it with their *earnest Prayers* to God for success. 'Tis an important conflict between God's Kingdom and the Devil's: Oh, hold up your hands in fervent requests while the dispute lasts. Favour O Lord, their righteous Cause; prosper thou the work of their hands. Arise, and let thy Enemies be scatter'd; and turn away transgression from our *Jacob*, that Iniquity may fall, and never rise more, shou'd be every one's Supplication, that wishes God's honour.

II. **U S E.** Since God will honour them that honour him, let this greatly encourage those that are engaged already in this

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this honourable design, *God will honour you.* This consideration shou'd make you renew your Courage, and it will especially serve to counter-balance any scornful reproaches, that may be cast upon you for your forwardness in this matter: 'Tis perhaps not the least of Satan's Artifices, to make an odious representation of a good Work, and by the fear of obloquy, to affrighten us from pursuing it, it will be but his usual way, if he say, I will go forth, and be a stand'ring *lying Spirit* in the Mouths of many, against them that are active against his Kingdom of Darkness.

It will therefore be *no wonder*, if such invidious suggestions as these should be hear'd, *viz.* That you are the *troublers of Israel*, 1 King. 18. 16. As *Elijah* was slander'd by *Ahab* for the like reason, that you are base *Hypocrites* who would be counted *Saints*, but will Cheat and Lye, and do any secret Evil; and that you make a *gain* of this Work, and the like; you know what sort of Men they be, from whom such venom may come, they that are in the Service of the *Father of Lies*, must be allow'd to make use of a little of his *Art*. But under all these Calumnies, I say to you in God's own words: *Fear not the reproaches of Men, neither be afraid of their revilings; for the Moth shall eat them up like a garment*, Isa. 51. 7, 8. they'll come to nought so long as they are without a Foundation: However, in the mean time, you have this to oppose, God will honour you, and therefore in contempt of all their reproaches, go on with resolution, saying with *David* in the like case; *Let them curse, but bless thou*, Ps. 109. 28.

Yea, whatever other difficulties may occur, let them only serve to make the Triumph of our Zeal more conspicuous; remember that you are *Soldiers* of Jesus Christ, and therefore for shame, must not flee for a little danger, you are bound to endure some hardship, 2 Tim. 2, 3. else you in effect say, that you will be *Soldiers* for any thing but fighting; you'll give him any proof of your valour, except by exposing your selves to hazard: How ridiculous a profession wou'd this be in a Christian, in these express terms? 'Tis more becoming you to mount the Breach, and to stand in the Gap,

My Brethren, you have hitherto run well; Oh, that nothing may now hinder you, it would be very uncomfortable to thousands of them that love God, if your Zeal should now decline, or if out of a regard to your own ease, you should seek a discharge from this Warfare, when at most 'tis but at the height of the Conflict. To prevent which, I shall offer

you

you some serious Motives, shewing you the evil Consequences of such an unseasonable declension,

Motive I. You will lose the happiest opportunity imaginable for publick Reformation. There are some great *Engines*, which to put in motion, is the greatest difficulty; and to begin well, is the hardest part of some Enterprizes; such a business is *Publick Reformation*, which is very happily begun among us. The Enemy, *viz.* All manner of Iniquity, did come in as a Flood, but the *Spirit of the Lord hath lift up a Standard against him*, Isa. 59. 19. unto which you and many others have repaired, who have march'd up to the face of that bold Enemy, so that he hath already made an halt; *In and about this City*, you have had the cordial assistance of Magistrates, to whom we may truly bear this Testimony; that *they have not done the work of the Lord negligently, in withholding the Sword from just Punishment*, Jer. 48. 10. *In the Margin.* as fearing the Curse of God denonnced against them who do. Your Names have in great part been cover'd from reproach, by their Secrecy, or by their Checks of such as dare threaten and reproach you for your Duty; many of different Persuasions have United in the Bands of Love for this Work, and some of Rank and Eminency, both in *Church and State*, so that now the Work is become both *Easie and Honourable*, yea, and safe too, in comparison of what it hath been; you have gain'd with some labour and pains, so much ground, that 'tis pity it should be lost again; after several thousand Convictions of Swearers and Cursers, we can observe a sensible alteration in Men's Dialect, those Throats that lately were as *open Sepulchres*, Rom. 3. 13, 14. sending forth a loathsom stench, are now, tho not *painted Sepulchres* (by assuming any great appearance of Piety) yet closed and shut, and so do not give that publick offence, nor are such a common nuisance as formerly. How great an Encouragement is this to proceed?

If we compare these things with the Circumstances, in which, as to these matters we were, not many Years since, it may tempt us to use *Balaam's* Expression of Astonishment; *What hath God wrought?* Num. 23. 23. What a strange turn is here in the affairs of our Israel? And doubtless if you go on with your wonted Zeal, and especially if the Bulk of serious Christians, *who wish you success*, will promote it by their concurrent endeavours, we may hope for a more general Triumph over the Kingdom of darkness: And can you think of losing such an opportunity as this, with any peace of Mind?

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Verily, Sirs, I tell you, many have desired to see these things which you see, and could not see them: Many *Mourners* are gone off the Stage, that would with all their Hearts and Souls, have put their hands to this blessed Work, had there been but such Laws, such Magistrates, and such other Encouragements as you meet with, but God did not honour them with such Advantages, you are they whom he hath chosen to trust these choice Talents with: Should you now after all, lose this season, as great would be the guilt of neglecting such a price in your hands, so there would remain no hope of ever seeing such another; for when once Laws of this nature are *laid asleep by disuse*, they are seldom awakned to purpose.

Besides that, your *Zeal in this City*, hath this singular advantage attending it, that it is likely to be influential upon the whole Kingdom, for as all the Blood in Man's Body circulates through the Heart, and is there invigorated, so most of the Kingdom by turns have recourse to their *Metropolis*, where they who are slack in this Work, may by your *Zeal* be provoked to an Imitation, and they who are, I fear, too secure from punishment in the Country, may meet with it here, it may be to their good and *Amendment*: So that upon all accounts, you especially are bound at this time to bestir your selves. / And I may bespeak you as *Hezekiah* did the *Levites* (in a work of Reformation too) My Sons be not you *now* negligent, for you hath the Lord chosen to serve him, 2 *Chron.* 29. 11.

Secondly, We may justly fear, that Prophaneness would be more rampant than ever after this little Check given to it; I doubt we should find, that the short contradiction it hath found from the late Laws, will have had but the same effect, as *Paul* says, God's Law once had upon him, that is, only to irritate their Lusts, *Rom.* 7. So that they will not only be as the Dog, in returning to their Vomit, but also as the Dog let loose, who is much the fiercer for having been chained: If once Evil Men burst these Bonds, and defeat these present attempts, who can but tremble to think, with what improved insolence recovered Wickedness will Triumph and *Insult*, when once it knows the smallness of your strength to oppose it. I may therefore allude to that of *St. Peter*, 2 *Epist.* 2 *Ch.* 21 v. and adventure to say, It had been better for you never to have begun than now to decline, better not to have fought, than to give Iniquity the advantage of a Victory, by an untimely retreat.

Thirdly,

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Thirdly, Such a declension of your Zeal, will betray an un-soundness in the Principles by which you have already been acted: You know some are apt to say, your Zeal is not Fire kindled from Heaven, but either from some *Personal Quarrel*, or an hypocritical *affectation of Esteem*, or at best but a Child-ish fondness for a *Novel* business, which lasts while it looks like a Wonder, and then it becomes a Weariness: Now, should you indeed desist in your present Circumstances, it would encrease the Presumption. I hope that you are acted by the most Noble Springs, from an awful tenderness for *the Honour of God*, Ps. 119. 136. grieved because *Men keep not his Law*, and from a compassionate concern, both for *Sinners* personal, and the *Nations* common good, which you have the Sagacity to apprehend the approaching ruine of, if Iniquity go uncontroll'd; but if these have been your reasons, they will yet be of force with you; Is not the name of God and the publick Good, as precious now as a few Years since, or have not such flagitious Crimes the same hurtful influence and aspect upon both still? Oh, beware that you cast not a reproach upon all that you have done hitherto, by a voluntary desertion of that Cause, which lately you seem'd so warm for; remember that a right and just Zeal, hath this Character, that 'tis *always*, and not only for a time, Gal. 4. 18.

Fourthly, The conquer'd obstinacy of wicked men will shame and reproach you; 'twas the Glory of our Lord Jesus, that when he and the Devil, had such a *stated Conflict* in the Wilderness, Matt. 4. 11. the Devil after many vain assaults, retreated, and our Saviour *kept the Field* as Conqueror: But it will be your great reproach, if in the struggle of this day between the Servants of these two Chieftains, you that are on Christ's side should first faint and flee, especially when you have so much the advantage every way: The flagitious Sinner hath God and his own Conscience to contend with, as well as with you, he hath both future and present dangers to discourage him, so that upon the whole, it will be strange in deed, if he think his Sins will bear his Charges, or quit costs, through disgrace and penalties here, and through the horrors of an endless night of darkness hereafter. But you have all things to encourage you, God and Conscience, the Civil Authority, and Joyful Prospects of Eternal Rewards; so that greater is your *assistance*, greater your *encouragement* every way, greater is He that is in you, than he that is in them, and shall they hold out, and you languish, *You* have every

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way the advantage of them, except you should want it in your own Resolution.

Fifthly, Consider the great danger that will follow, if thro' your neglect the Work of *Reformation* should not be accomplish'd: What a train of Calamities did *Eli's* remissness in punishing his Vile Sons, bring upon the *Publick* and *himself*, on himself, and his Posterity after him? The *Enemy* in God's habitation, the *Ark* taken Captive, and Thirty Thousand of *Israel* slain, is the next news we hear concerning the *Publick*, Ch. 4. Then *Eli* himself dies the death of an *unredeemed Ass*, breaks his Neck with a fall, after that evil tydings had broken his heart, his two wicked Sons are slain in the Battel, his Daughter-in-law expires in her *anguish* and grief, and all his Posterity is left under the Curse and sentence of Rejection, which after the Reign of *Saul* and *David*, 2 King. 27. was executed by *Solomon*; the Vengeance of God follows him after death it self, in the Generations to come; and all this for the *Iniquity he knows of*, Ch. 3. 13. for that *Emphatical*, that heavy Sin, of not punishing Scandalous Offenders: Oh, what an awful warning should this be to Magistrates and People, that they incur not the guilt of it! That they do not through negligence, or sloth, or a foolish *Tenderness*, omit to vindicate the Honour of God, from the scorn of Profligate Sinners; we wou'd hope to see shortly that universal restraint of such as shall be both the *Safety* and *Ornament* of our Land, but if you, and others, if Magistrates or People, have no heart to do so much for God; who knows how soon the Glory may depart from us, and we be forced to write *I-Chabod* on all our Comforts, when the weight of some *Additional Curse* also may fall on them, who had special advantages for doing their Duty, but did it not. Nay yours after you may feel it, and the frowns of God be entail'd on your Posterity, so provoking a Sin is it, not to rise up for God against Evil-doers, when he sounds an Alarm to the Conflict.

Nay, let me tell you this thing further, that your own Personal Piety in other relations, may be no security to you, against Temporal Judgments; *Eli* had, himself, a mighty Reverence for God, with what humble submission, doth he adore the Justice of his Threatning 'Tis the Lord, let him do what seems good in his sight, 1 Sam. 3. 18. His heart was set upon the Ark of God; That Word, *the Ark of God is taken*, Ch. 4. 18. knock'd him down dead, yet for all this, God's anger was not turned away, but his hand was stretched out still.---

No.

No, far be it from me to let thee or thine continue in Honour, on thee shall be all that contempt and shame, which thou should'st have poured on those Lewd Wretches, and because thou hast let them escape, thou shalt not.

Sixtly. But then, if on the other hand, you are sincere in these endeavours, how sweet and comfortable will the sense of it be, at death, and for ever! 'Tis but a poor Inch of Time, we have, in which to do our God *such Service* as this, in Heaven are no Conflicts between Saints and Sinners; there is no Warfare, all is Triumph and Peace, no trial of your Courage and Patient Resolution; 'tis in this present Life if ever, we must honour God in this kind; and sure when you are going off the Stage, Conscience will enquire what hath been done for God and his Interest? And the more of Self-denial, the more pains, hazards and discouragements you have gone through to serve his Honour, the sweeter will your reflections on it be, and with greater confidence will you hope and pray for his Salvation. Of this, you may see an Instance upon Record in *David, Psal. 26. 24.* compared with *v. 9. I have not sat with vain Persons, I have hated the Congregation of evil doers: O gather not, thou, my Soul, with Sinners.* &c. *Qu. d.* Thou Lord, that art the Omniscient Witness, and shortly wilt be the Final Judge of all my ways, know'st that I never loved either the ways or the company of profane Sinners; I have always appeared againt them, I have checked and discountenanced them; they have been a grief to me and I have been an awe and restraint upon them; now therefore I pray, let not me when I die, go with them, with whom I could not endure to live; we were never *delightful Associates* in this World, O never let me be their *sorrowful Companion* in the next; and how certain accomplishment must such requests, so reasonable and so suitable have? You shall go, not to such as you grieved at and abhorr'd, but to, such as you have loved, where none shall either *offend God, or grieve you* by their Sin and Folly, where shall be *no more reforming Work* to do; because no more Sin or Blemish, *no more conflict*, because no Enemies of God, no more danger or hazard in *God's Service*, because none to oppose: Where all the difficulties and discouragements shall be left behind, to poor Mortals that shall follow after you, complaining and groaning, through these *black Toms of Kedar*, when you are free from the woes and vexations thereof.

And

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And then my Brethren, then will come the Crowns and Thrones, the Robes and Palms of Victory, to adorn them who have with greatest zeal and labour, striven against Sin and Satan, for God and Holiness: Oh, who would want these comfortable thoughts upon a dying Bed! How much better is this, than to have Conscience chase thee out of this World, into Eternity, with such upbraiding clamours, as Go, thou slothful *unprofitable* Servant, thou *unsavoury Salt*, thou *Cumberer* of the ground, thou *despised Vessel*, in which thy God had no pleasure, to make any use of!

But then that you may reflect thus comfortably upon your endeavours, you must be directed by such Rules as these!

1. Beware that none of you be guilty of wounding the Honour of God your selves, while you pretend to repair the the Injuries it receives from others; let no man think to compound for any indulged Crimes of his own, by being severe upon those of others; you have many observers, let it be your care to disappoint them that watch for your halting; the wicked *Cham's* of the Age, will be glad to see the *Noah's*, the promoters of Righteousness, Drunk; remember that they who *reprove the Works of Darkness*, must have no *fellowship with them*, Eph. 11. You will much more freely throw the first Stone at others, when you are without such Sins your selves.

2. See that God's honour be the end directly designed by you; go not along with others, merely for company, when you think not why, that it may not be said of you, as of him who God *Ordained to be the Rod of his Anger* to a sinful Nation, that you indeed have done what greatly honours God, *howbeit, you mean it not so*, Isa. 10. 7. An explicate vigorous intention to serve your Maker's Glory, is an essential part of such more immediate Service.

3. Shew your selves satisfi'd with God's honour, for your *Reward*, being far from a proud affectation of human Applause, or any nauseous discovery of Self-esteem; would it not be a sad exchange, if God should say, they have their reward? To lose the approbation and favour of Heaven, for the mistaken good opinion of poor Worms. Let then the most unaffected humility shew, that you love not the praise of Men, so much as the praise of God. Let no man have occasion, so to interpret your Carriage, as if the Language of it, were like that of vain-glorious *Jehu*, *Come see my Zeal for the Lord*.

'Tis

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'Tis then an happy case indeed, when a Man's Face shines as *Moses's*, with the lustre of eminent Perfections, and *himself* knows it not, or at least covers them with a Vail of Modesty; while you endeavour to be as the lights of the World, be like the bright *flaming Taper*, which at once casts a splendid light before others, and yet an obscure shade about it self.

4. See that the methods you use in this Work, be as suited to the Honour of God, as the matter of your Zeal is, I take this for granted, that you are acting in the safest Cause in the World, you are not prosecuting any for differences of Judgment in Religion, or matters of Conscience, in such a case, Men's misguided Zeal, oft makes those woful mistakes (spoken of by Christ, *John 16. 2.*) that I should fear to wish you *God speed*. But yours is the most unexceptionable cause, *viz.* To expose to punishment those profane practices, which no Conscience was ever so perverse, as seriously to espouse; who ever heard any cry out in bitter agonies, that they had not Sworn nor Whor'd, or contemned the Sabbath more?

Now take care that your means be as warrantable, for the discovery of such Offenders; you know 'tis spoken to God's honour, that he *Tempts no man to Evil*, Jam. 1. 13. neither let any say, he was tempted of you, as I doubt not but you count it a wicked thing to provoke a Man to Passion, in hopes that he will Swear and Curse, so shou'd you in other cases, be afraid to *lead any into Temptation*, 'tis not honourable to kindle those impure Flames which you would quench, and which cannot burn, the least while without offence to God, nor is it safe to give Poison, in hopes of an Antidote; besides that, it may prove a dangerous temptation to your selves, and you fall into the snare you hid for others, or at least may bring you under the reproach and suspicion of an evil design, by such as shall refuse your bait, and so you get a blot not easily to be wiped out.

Lastly, Be greatly concerned that you can honour him no more in this Matter, especially if your Endeavours should not in the main prove successful: O grieve under it *for God's sake*, that his Great Name must yet suffer contempt, his Worship be despised, and his Laws trampled under foot, and you cannot help him; *for the Nation's sake*, that when God would purge them, they would not be purged: Mourn over a People that hate to be Reformed, for whom, what will remain but utter Destruction, of which incorrigibleness in Sin, is a *desperate Omen*; 'tis said of these Sons of *Eli*, that they would
not.

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not hearken to their Father's reproof, *because the Lord would destroy them*; and for your *own* sakes, that God would not honour you with Success in so noble Service.

But to conclude, if on the other hand you do prevail (as I would by no means despair of it) then will it be *God's Glory*, to have his Name held reverend, and his Law made honourable: 'Twill be the glory of our Land, to be called an Habitation of Holiness; the Glory of our City, that 'tis a Faithful City, full of Judgment, in which Righteousness lodges, Isa. 1. 21. yea. the Glory of our Prince, that in his days we were delivered, not only from Popery and Slavery, but from a terrible contagion of open Profaneness, and that in His time Righteousness and Peace kiss each other.

And it will be the Glory of *all you*, who have been active Instruments of all this, for having honour'd God, you he will honour: And the *Shame* shall be to none, but but them, who deserve no better, and for whom the most charitable Prayer we can put up, is that of *David*, *Fill thou their faces with shame, that they may seek thy Name*, O Lord, Ps. 83. 16.

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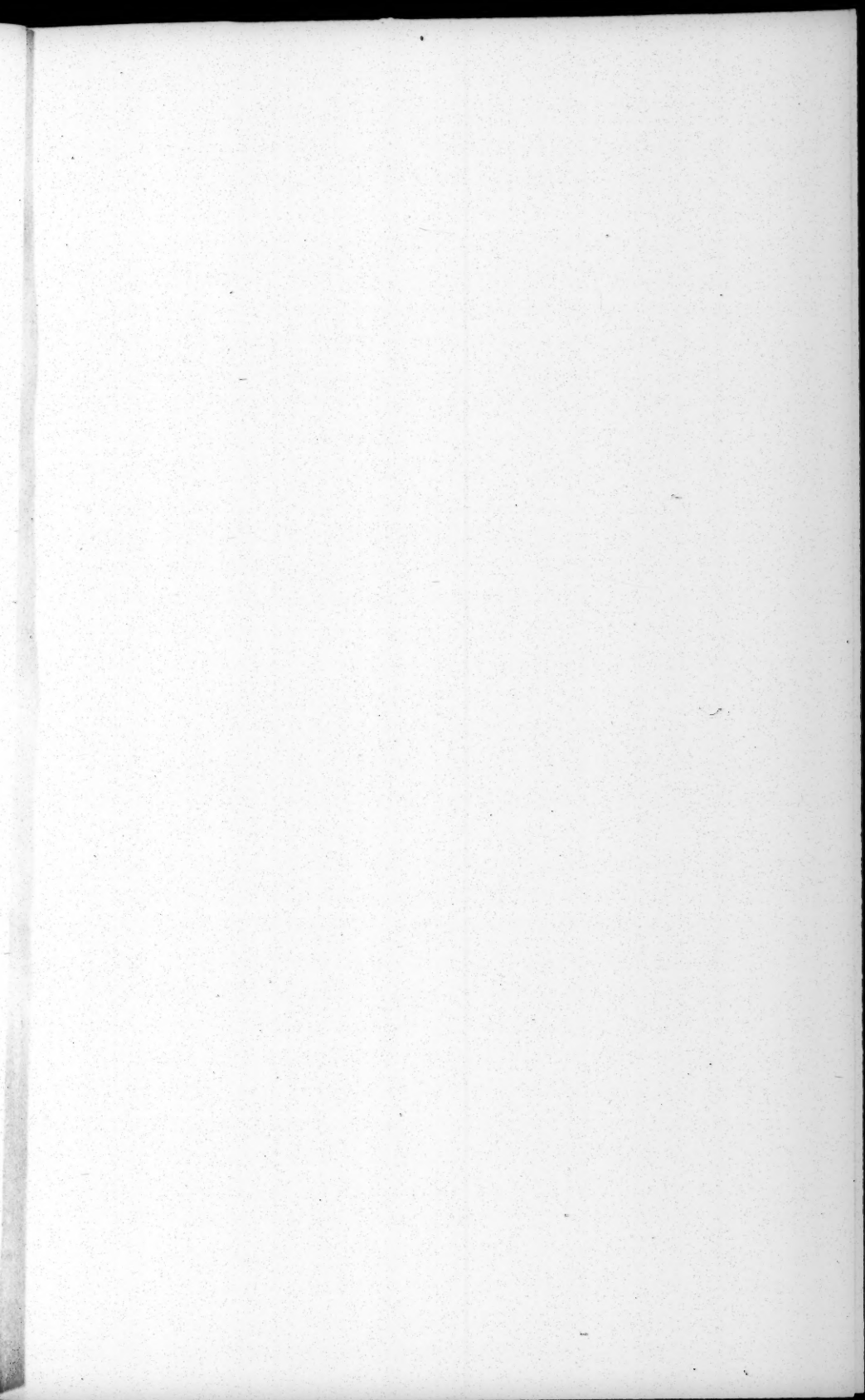
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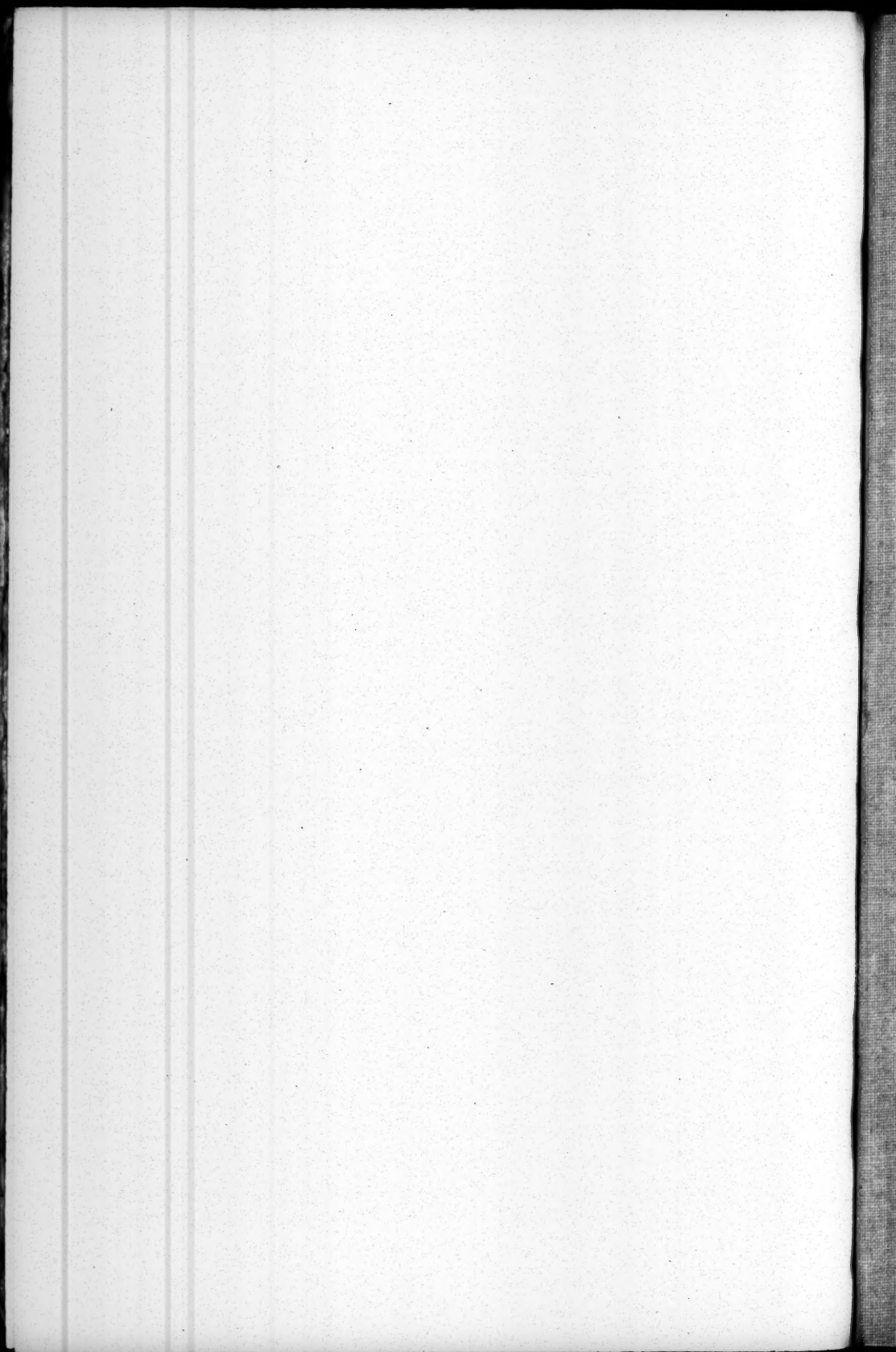
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